

2089

A
V I E W
O F T H E
L I F E
O F
K I N G D A V I D.

Wherein are OBSERVATIONS

On Divers Historical Passages therein recited,

Highly proper to be noticed by all Denominations of Men,
who think the Old Testament a fundamental part of
their RELIGION.

IN PARTICULAR

Recommended to all PRIESTS and OTHERS,
(both Jewish and Christian) concerned in
the Propagation.

Pay no Reverence to a Grey Headed Error,
Nor prejudice Truth for the sake of Novelty.

By W. STILTON, HOROLOGIST:

Printed for the Author, and sold at No 62, Old Bailey, and
at the Ship Coffee House, Ship Passage, Leaden Hall Market;
opposite the Cross Keys, Gracechurch Street.

[Price 6d.]

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THE first mention we find of David, is in 1 Sam. chap. xvi. where the Lord speaks to Samuel, and says; "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oyl, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a King among his sons. And Samuel said, how can I go? if Saul hears it, he will kill me." Then the Lord forms a presence of sacrifice to him, and says, "Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord. And call Jesse unto the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do. And thou shalt anoint to me him, whom I shall name unto thee."

1 SAM.
xvi.

Afterward we find Samuel went to Bethlehem, unto Jesse, as the Lord commanded, and had all his family brought before him, and the Lord instructed him which to chuse; and he chose David, the youngest of the seven; (the

B

names

1 SAM. names of the other brothers were Eliab, Abi-
 xvi. nadab, Shammah, Nathanael, Raddai and Ozem,
 and the two sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail.
 ver. 13. Zeruiah bare Joab, and Abigail bare Amasa.
 And " Samuel took the horn of oyl, and anoint-
 " ed him in the midst of his brethren. And the
 " spirit of the Lord came upon David from that
 " day forward."

The cause given of the Lord's displeasure with Saul is, by deceiving him, and not executing his fierce commands towards the Amalekites, in its full extent. *Though I think Saul executed his commission in a manner not to be blamed,* (if the Lord delighted ever so much in the blood of the Amalekites) for we find in the preceding chapter, ver. 4. " That Saul gathered an army of 210,000 men, and attacked the Amalekites, took Agag their king alive, and utterly destroyed all his people with the edge of the sword. But we are taught to believe God was not satisfied with this, because Agag was not slain also, and likewise because they did not destroy their goods and cattle, for his commands were, " To go and " smite Amalek, (*meaning the Amalekites*) " and utterly destroy all they have, and to " spare them not; but to slay both man and " woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, " camel and ass." And all this cruelty and slaughter, we find, is out of a piece of revenge, for what their forefathers were guilty of 400 years before, in the time of Moses, and which was no other fault, than because they were fearful of letting the Israelites (a body of above 600,000 fighting men, besides women and children) pass through their territories in their way from Egypt to the Land of Canaan; *which I think was but prudent; but if it was a fault, I think they were pretty well punished for it,* for we find that Joshua slew Amalek then, and all his

his people with the edge of the sword ; for we read, *Exod. xvii.* " That, during the battle, " Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up on a hill " hard by, and that the Amalekites were destroyed all the time he held up his hands ; " and such was their fury, that when his hands " began to be heavy and tired, they put a stone " under him to support him, and he sat thereon, " and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, " till the going down of the sun." But for all this slaughter we find God to be so exceeding wrath and revengeful that he bids Moses write it in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, that he will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven, and swears that he will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. *A hard Case !* but so we find is related. *I think it is a pity, those poor unhappy people were not totally destroyed at that time, or that they never were born.* However to go on, Saul we find sinned in not fulfilling Gods orders, by saving the life of Agag, and tho' Saul humbles himself to the Lord before Samuel, and prays for pardon in this his offence, yet, if we look in the preceding chapter, he is not forgiven, for when he says to Samuel, " Turn again with me, that I may worship the " Lord." Samuel says, " I will not return " with thee, for thou hast rejected the word of " the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee " from being king over Israel." And when Samuel turns from him to go, the king pitiously takes hold of the skirts of his mantle for him to stay, and give him some comfort under this his affliction, but he proudly or cruelly makes answer again and says, " the Lord hath rent the " kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath " given it to a neighbour of thine that is better " than thou ;" the king meekly answers and says,

1 SAM.

xvi.

“Tho’ I have sinned, yet honour me now I pray
 “the before the elders of my people and before
 “all Israel, and turn again with me that I may
 “worship the Lord thy God; at last Samuel
 contents and turns to Saul, and Saul worships
 the Lord; then Samuel haughtily says to the
 king, “bring hither unto me Agag, the king of
 “the Amalekites,” and Agag was brought unto
 him accordingly; “and he came in delicately or
 “pleasantly,” and with a confidence in the
 kings mercy, said, “surely the bitterness of
 “death is past.” And Samuel answered, “As
 “thy sword hath made women childless, so
 “shall thy Mother be childless also.” *A very*
inhuman and unjust answer, for it was not Agag
that did the deed, and was nothing but what I re-
lated before, on the old score in the time of Moses.
 Nevertheless, however innocent poor Agag
 was, we find he suffered for the sin (if any) of
 his fore father Amalek; however he is delivered
 up to Samuel, and he not only kills him, but cruel-
 ly “hews him in pieces,” (as is said) “before
 “the Lord in Gilgal.” After which Samuel
 departs from Saul, and goes to his dwelling at
 Ramah, and comes no more to see Saul to the
 Day of his death, but we find notwithstanding
 Saul’s repentance, and the sacrifice of Agag, the
 Lord still repents that he hath made Saul king
 over Israel. *A sad instance of Gods revenge! if*
true.

ver. 14.

ver. 15

But to return to David.— After Saul had
 anointed him king. Samuel departs from Beth-
 lehem and returns to Ramah, and as for Saul,
 we find, “that the spirit of the Lord departs
 “from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord
 “troubled him.” and Sauls servants saw the
 trouble of the King and said, “Let our Lord
 “command us to seek out a man who is a cun-
 “ning player on the Harp; and it shall come
 “to

L I F E O F K I N G D A V I D.

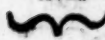
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“to pass when the evil spirit of God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand and thou shalt be well,” *This looks like a piece of cunning and treachery of Samuel’s, to bring into notice his little favourite David, whom he designs for the throne; for how should Saul’s servants, unless instigated by some Priest, think that the evil spirit which God had afflicted him with, would be driven away by the sound of a man’s playing upon the harp. I will allow the power of music to be very great, but not powerful enough to alter the will and purpose of God. However, we find Saul sends his servants to find out this Musician, and they go and find David in a field, keeping his father’s sheep, (they had their direction no doubt from Samuel, or how should they know so readily where to find him, we suppose him at that time a raw country lad.) However, they find him, and bring him to Saul, and Saul instantly falls in love with him, and appoints him the honour of being his armour bearer; undoubtedly by Samuel’s persuasion, or how is it probable that the king should confer such a dignity upon a person, of his age and inexperience, but we don’t find he ever acted in that capacity. Saul afterwards speaks to Jesse his father and says, “Let David I pray thee, ver. 22. “be in my service; for he hath found favour “in my sight.” And Jesse consents, and he seems then to enter again into his service, (for he must be in his service before this, by being his armour bearer) some time after the evil spirit ver. 23. “from God was upon Saul, and David took “his harp and played with his hand, and the “evil spirit departed from him.”*

1 SAM.
xvi.

The next thing that happened after David Chap 17. was in Saul’s service, was, when the armies of the Israelites and Philistines was encamped and ready for battle, when there came out a champion from the camp of the Philistines named Goliath

1 SAM. Goliath of Gath, whose gigantic stature was six
xvii. cubits and a span in height, with an helmet of

 brass upon his Head, armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was 5000 shekels of brass, and he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass upon his shoulders, and the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed 600 shekels of iron, and one went before him bearing a shield, what weight that was we read nothing of, but if it was in proportion to the rest, it must be what no man could lift but himself, or another like to himself, but we don't read of two, (however let that pass,) this colossus (which none can equal but Og King of Basan,) came forth and with a thundering voice, cried out to the armies of Israel, and said unto them. "Why are ye come out

ver. 8.

"to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and all you servants to Saul? chuse you a man for you, and let him come down to me. And if he be able to fight with, and kill me, then will we be your servants, but if I prevail, then shall ye be our servants; and serve us. And Saul and his whole army was dismayed, because they had no person of like stature to encounter with him."

ver. 9.

I see no reason why the Israelites should fear on that account, for they were no way obliged to risk upon single combat, to gratify their enemy, unless by choice. However, we find them in a strange consternation, what to do with this giant; we find David notwithstanding his being so greatly caressed and honoured by Saul in the preceding chapter, yet in this, (whether by his own will, or by Saul's we know not,) is retired again from Saul's service, and gone to his Father's, in his old calling of a shepherd, for at this troublesome time, Jesse his father, sends out three of his eldest brothers to follow Saul to battle, but leaves

L I F E of K I N G D A V I D.

leaves David behind, which shews he had no great opinion of his abilities, whatever Saul had by appointing him his *armour bearer*, indeed afterwards he was sent to them, to carry some provisons, but as for fighting he was supposed to be too young. The Israelites finding they could pitch upon none to encounter this Goliath, were upon the point of fleeing. Whereupon it is said, David steps up unto them and asks, "What shall be the reward of that man that shall kill this terrible monster;" the answer was, "the king will enrich him with great riches, give him his daughter, and make his fathers house free in Israel." His elder brothers hearing him speak in that manner, grew jealous, and accused him of vanity and pride, and told him it would be better for him to go home, and mind the sheep; nevertheless what passed noised, and came to the kings ear; and he sent for him. And when he came in the kings presence he courageously said, "Let no mans heart fail him because of this Philistine, for I myself will encounter him," and Saul said, "thou art but a youth, and he is a man of strength, and long experience." But David replied, "I fear him not, young as I am, when I have been watching my fathers sheep, I have protected them from the paws of the Lion and the Bear, and I doubt not but the Lord will make me overcome this Philistine also." I think it remarkably strange if David performed these heroic actions, of protecting his fathers sheep, it was not more known and spread abroad. We don't find that Saul knew any thing of his valour, by what he says to him, when he offers his service to encounter Goliath, nor even his father, or he would doubtless have sent him to battle instead of his brothers, or at least with them, especially as they were at such a great loss for a champion. However we find that this

1 SAM.

xvi.

ver. 25.

ver. 32.

ver 33.

ver. 34.

1 SAM. this remarkable valour of his, David himself
 xvii. speaks of, in the manner as is related. Where-
 upon Saul says unto David, "Go and encounter
 ver. 27. "with him, and the Lord be with you. And he
 ver. 38. "armed him, and put a helmet of brass upon his
 "head. And David girded his sword upon his
 ver. 39. "armour, and assay'd to go, but he had not
 "proved it, (*meaning he had not tried how they*
 "*fitted.*) And he said unto Saul, I cannot go
 ver. 40. "with these, and put them off, and took his staff
 "in his hand, and chose five smooth stones
 "out of the brook, and put them in his shep-
 "herd's bag, and a sling in his hand, and away
 "he went to meet the Philistine. And Goliath
 when he looked about, and saw the littleness of
 David, despised him. However, David en-
 counters, and overcomes him, for being a cun-
 ning man at slinging a stone, he hit Goliath with
 one in the forehead, and he fell on his face to the
 Earth. Then David runs and tramples on him,
 takes Goliath's sword out of his sheath, and with
 it, cuts off his head. And when the Philistines saw
 their champion was dead, they fled, *that is not*
standing to their agreement, of becoming Sauls ser-
vants, if their champion was overcome, and the
 Israelites pursued them as far as the gates of
 Ekron. Afterwards David takes the head and
 carries it to Jerusalem. *It is very strange and*
worthy to be remarked, that notwithstanding Saul
equips and sends out David to encounter this Goliath,
and he went from the king in so public a manner, as
before the face of the whole army, that it should not
be known, who he was; for we read, "And
 "when Saul saw David go forth against the
 "Philistine, he said unto Abner, (the cap-
 tain of his host) "Abner, whose son is this
 "youth? And Abner said as my soul liveth, I
 "cannot tell". And the king said "En-
 "quire who the stripling is." And as David
 returned

L I F E O F K I N G D A V I D.

9

returned from his victory, Abner took him by ^{1 SAM.} the hand, and brought him before Saul, with ^{xvii.} the head of the Philistine in his hand. Saul said unto him, "Whose son art thou young ^{ver. 58.} man?" *As if he had never seen him, notwithstanding it has just been related, that he play'd before him on the harp; asked his father to keep him in his service, said that he loved him, conferred the honour on him of being his armour bearer, and lastly his setting him out for the encounter.* But to we read, that neither he nor Abner, or any of the army knew him, and so to make himself known, he at last answers. "I am the son of thy servant Jesse.

The next thing related is the great friend- ^{Chap. 13.} ship between David and Jonathan, (Saul's eldest son,) and they make a covenant of fidelity to each other, (*tho' I think a very unnatural one,*) for Jonathan (so far from being jealous of him, as one should imagine he would,) goes so far as to strip himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it unto David, even to his sword his bow, and girdle. What peculiar service David had done to Jonathan, we know not; but we find him very diligent in all Saul sets him about, and much beloved by the people; Saul soon after entertains a jealousy of him, and one Day when "the evil spirit from God," came again upon Saul, he desired David as at other times before, to play to him upon his harp. And having, "a Javelin in his hand, he struck at ^{ver 10,} him, and thought to smite him, even unto the ^{part 11.} wall. But David had the dexterity to avoid the blow, and slipped out of his presence. Saul afterwards grows more afraid and jealous, so removes David further from him, artfully making him a captain over a thousand, and tells him if he is valiant he will give him his eldest daughter, Merab, to wife, (thinking some time

C

or

1 SAM.
xviii.

ver. 18.

or other, he may get slain by the hands of his enemies, for he did not care to lay violent Hands on him himself for fear of the people, knowing they loved him.) David makes answer and says, "Who am I? or what is my Family? that I should be son in law to the king?" I suppose by this speech, David forgets his claim to the reward, offered him to encounter Goliath, it must be supposed here, that neither he nor the king thought any thing of it; otherwise this discourse last mentioned could not have passed between them. However the King's mind alters, and just when he should have espoused her, according to this second promise, he weds her to one Adriel, the Merholatite. It is agreed afterwards that David shall have Michal, Saul's other daughter, on condition he brought to him an hundred forekins of the Philistines, which he accordingly does, (tho' I think he had but little encouragement to set out on the expedition, knowing how he was cheated before,) however the king does not break his word this time, for he gives him his daughter Michal to wife, tho' had much rather he had fell by the hands of his enemies, his enmity was so great.

Chap. 19.

ver. 10.

Saul afterwards speaks to his son Jonathan; and to all his servants to kill David, (I suppose secretly,) but Jonathan instead of complying with his Father's desires, informs David of the design against him, and advises him to hide himself, and afterwards is so good as to persuade his father to a reconciliation. Some time after, another war breaking out with the Philistines, he is sent again to battle, and returns again with victory. As a reward for this piece of service, the king grows again jealous of him, for it says; "That the evil Spirit from the Lord was upon him again, and as he sat in his house, with the Javelin
" in

“ in his Hand,” (*the second time*) “ he sent
 “ again to David to play unto him, and while he
 “ was playing, he sought to smite him again
 “ to the wall. But David fled from him that
 “ night also.” *I don't think it probable that
 David after the miraculous escape he had made be-
 fore, would venture a second time to play before him,
 while such a weapon was in his hand as a javelin.*
 Saul sends messengers after this to David's house,
 in the morning, to seek his life, but Michal his
 wife having heard of the kings design, pre-
 serves him, by letting him down overnight out
 of the Window, and so he made his escape by
 flight. Michal artfully to prolong time, to fa-
 cilitate his escape, deceiveth her father and his
 messenger, with an image in David's Bed. David
 fled then to Samuel, at Ramah, and tells him
 all that Saul had done unto him, and they de-
 parted from thence, and dwelt, *I suppose for
 more security, at Naioth.*

1 SAM.
xix.

David some time after leaving Samuel, and Chap. 20.
 returning to Jonathan, consulteth with him
 about his safety, when they renew their cove-
 nant. Jonathan's token to David, and Saul missing
 David at his table, is writ in such a confused
 odd manner there's no making sense or mean-
 ing of it, (it is not probable at all David should
 come and set at Saul's table, to eat meat when
 the other was all the while seeking his life,)
 However Jonathan and David's parting is a
 scene of true friendship.

David after his departure from Jonathan goes Chap. 21.
 to Ahimelech the Priest, who was at Nob. David
 seeing there by accident, Doeg, Saul's chiefest
 herdsman, flies the place, lest he should be dis-
 covered and taken; and goes to Achish, king of
 Gath. *How David should fly to the king of Gath
 for protection is very strange, because there he is in a
 Philistine country, and he was the person that killed*

1 SAM *their Champion, and otherwise did them at several*
 xxi. *other Times so much mischief.* We find he was

not long there before he was known, on which account he was sore afraid, *and I think not without reason*, at length he was laid hold on and brought before the king, but there he had the artifice to feign madness; and scrambled and tore on the doors of the king's gates like a beast, let his spittle drivel down his beard, and deforming himself so much that when he was brought before Achish, he said unto his servants,
 ver. 14 "Lo you see the man is mad, why therefore
 ver. 15 "have you brought him unto me? have I need
 "of madmen in my presence? shall this fellow
 "come into my house?" And so they dismissed him, and a lucky escape I think he had. *I am apt to think a Philistine would not have fared so well in Israel, mad or not mad.*

Chap. 22. David when he escapes from thence, goes to the cave Adullam, what country that is in is not express'd, however it is not so far off, nor so private; but his brethren and all his fathers house hearing of it, go down thither to him, and not them only, but
 ver. 2. "likewise every one
 "that was in distress, and in debt, and was discontented, gathered themselves unto him."
What he could do for their relief, that was in so much trouble himself, I know not. I wonder Saul did not find him out among the rest. But so it is told that these people, or banditti, gathered themselves about him, to the number of 400 men, making him their captain, and ruler. After which he goes over to Mizpah, of Moab, and asks leave of the king, to let him and all those about him settle there, and his request is granted. But the prophet Gad, advises him to depart, *(for reasons not known,)* and return to the land of Judah, and he did so, and came to the forest of Hareth. Now we read of Ahimelech
 and

and sixty-five other priests, being by Saul's orders slain, because he thought they were confederates with David, and knew where he was, and would not discover him. Then he joins with the Keilites, and rescueth their city from the ravages of the Philistines. But being informed of the coming of Saul, and advised by the Lord, of the treachery of the Keilites he makes his escape from thence, to Ziph, there dwelling in a wilderness, we find Jonathan comes and comforts him, *how he came to find him out, we are not told*, but Saul cannot find him, "tho' he seeketh for him every day." Saul at length is called back from pursuing him, by the Philistines invading his kingdom. And David went from thence, to dwell in a strong hold at Enged.

1 SAM. xxii
Chap. 23.

Saul's affairs being over with the Philistines, he renews his pursuit of David, who has recourse to hide himself in a cave. *(But I think it must be a pretty large one, to hide him and all his men, for we shall find he has not yet parted from them.)* however romantic it may appear, but Saul comes to the cave too, and goes in likewise, but he does not see David; whose men, that were in the cave with him, persuade him that now was the time for revenge. But we find he only *cuts off privately the skirt of his coat, and repents that he did that, because he was his master and one of God's anointed.* However he calls after him, when he was going out, letting him know that he had been in his power, and was far from being that enemy to him as he thought. Saul acknowledges his fault, and concludes by saying, "the Lord reward thee for

Chap. 24.

ver. 19.

"the good thou hast done unto me this day.
 "And now behold, I know well that thou shalt
 "be king over Israel. Swear now therefore
 "by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my
 "seed after me. And David did so." After
 this

1 SAM. this oath being sworn by David, Saul returns home, and David and his men to their Cave.

xxv.

Chap. 25. We next read of the death of Samuel, with David's arrival at Paran, where he sends Nabal a complimentary greeting, and Nabal sends him a churlish answer, which so incenses him that he has a thought of killing him, but he is pacified by Abigail Nabal's Wife. Soon after Nabal dies, and David marries his widow, he here also taketh to wife Ahinoam, of Jezreel. We are now likewise informed that David's former wife, (Saul's daughter) is given to one Phalti, the son of Laish, Saul notwithstanding his late solemn promise of reconciliation still persecuteth David.

Chap. 26. David here comes privately into Saul's camp, finding him fast asleep, Abithai tempts him to slay him, or to let him do it; but he doth not consent, saying, "who can stretch his hand out against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?" yet he makes an odd speech after, for he says, ver. 9. (tho' he wont,) "as the Lord liveth the Lord shall smite him." We find he only takes away his spear, and cruse of water, and reproves Abner for his neglect of duty, in not keeping better watch, Saul being acquainted with his late situation, again maketh acknowledgement of his fault, and promiseth never to disturb him hereafter, so they are again reconciled, and depart seeming friends.

Chap. 27. But David puts no great confidence in Saul's words and fearing one day or other he should perish by his hands, says, "there is nothing better for me, than that I should speedily return into the land of the Philistines. So he and the men that were with him, to the number of 600 went over to Achish king of Gath."

ver 1.

It is a very unaccountable resolve I think, to fly to

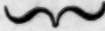
a country, he so late was obliged to feign himself mad, *1 SAM. xxvi.* in order to make his escape from.) But so it is recorded, and more, for he hath the assurance to go to the king, to ask him for a city and land to settle in, (as if he had done them all the service in the world) and the king we find as foolishly grants his request, likewise having great confidence of his valour makes him chief captain of his host. David does not abuse the trust reposed in him, is very successful, in the wars of the Philistines, for it is said, "he marched against *ver. 8.* the Amalekites and other nations," (with whom they were then waring, his own country not excepted, "unmercifully destroying every thing he laid his hands on, left neither man, *ver. 9* or woman alive, in all their countries.

About this time we are informed of Saul's Chap. 28 going to the Witch of Endor, (*I have no great faith in things of this sort. I cannot believe the mysteries of futurity, were ever revealed to human knowledge, and all pretensions to it, when they come to be thoroughly examined will be sure to dissolve into superstition and ignorance. If we peruse all things recorded in antient history, either sacred or profane, we find that the world in former ages were very liable to be imposed on and extremely credulous of every thing of marvelous appearance, not giving themselves the trouble to examine its cause or possibility. But we are no ways obliged at this time of day, now learning is more diffused, and our understandings thereby more enlightened, to continue in that darkness our forefathers did, who knew no better. We find no necromances, conjurers, wizards, seers, witches, pretended prophets, and speaking oracles, at these times since the bright sun of reason and philosophy has darted its rays upon our minds, such ignorant delusions vanish into smoke, they are gone, and I can affirm, will be heard of no more. However to go on with the story without further digression, we find* Saul

- 1 SAM. Saul went to this witch, and it was during the
 xiv. time that David was with the Philistines, and
 when they marched down upon the Israelites.
 Saul thereby being in great straits, applies to
 the Lord for relief but the Lord answers him not,
 neither by *Dreams*, nor by *Urim*, nor by *pro-*
phets. Being thus forsaken by God, over-
 whelmed with fear and despair, and withal wil-
 ling to know his destiny, poor Saul at last ap-
 plies to this witch. When he comes to her,
 ver. 11. she asks him "who she shall bring up unto him?"
 And he said, "bring me up Samuel." which
 we find she did, and then, and not till then, as
 great a witch as she was, knew that it was Saul
 that applied to her, on which she was fore afraid
 of Saul; because he had issued out an order
 for destroying all the witches in his kingdom,
 but he promising her safety, she proceeded;
 then he asks her what she saw, and she tells him
 she saw *Gods ascending out of the earth*. And he
 said unto her, *what form is he of?* meaning
 Samuel I suppose, (but this is making Samuel a
 ver. 14 God,) and she said, "an old man cometh up,
 "and he is covered with a mantle." And Saul
 perceived it was Samuel, and bowed himself.
 ver. 15. and Samuel said to Saul, "Why hast thou dis-
 "quieted me, by the means of this wicked wo-
 "man, to bring me up?" *It is no ways agreeable to*
reason, that it is, or ever was, in the power of any such
as those to disturb the rest of a departed soul, upon any
occasion whatever,) however to go on, Saul pite-
 ously answers him, "I am sore distressed for the
 "Philistines make war against me, and God has
 "departed from me, so I have called to thee in
 "the depth of my Affliction, that thou mayest
 "make known unto me, what I shall do." But
 ver. 16. Samuel instead of advising or comforting him,
 sternly answer, "wherefore then dost thou ask of
 "me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee,
 "and

“ and the Lord hath done to him as he spake ” ^{1 SAM.}

“ by me.” Any one would from the above be ^{xxviii.}

apt to think, Samuel adressed such part of verse 

17 to the Witch, “ for the Lord hath rent the ^{ver. 17.}

“ kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to

“ thine neighbour, even to David,” (I suppose

meaning he would do it, for he had not done it

yet,) here he uses a plea, which certainly is de-

grading the master from whom he seems com-

missioned, the text runs thus, verse 18, “ Because ^{ver. 18.}

“ thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor

“ executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek,

“ therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto

“ the this day.” *Meaning the seed of Amalek, for*

Amalek as I observed before lived in the time of

Moses; why the ghost of Samuel should express him-

self in that manner is very strange, when he knew

that Saul had slain the Amalekites, as express'd in

the 15th chapter, and spared none then but Agag their

king, and to appease God, him he surrendered up, ac-

cording to his directions, and was by him slain in

Gilgal. Therefore what could he do more? never-

theless, after such unjust accusation he tells him,

“ Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel ^{ver. 19.}

“ with thee into the hands of the Philistines, and

“ tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.”

But we don't find that true, for one of Saul's

sons Ishbosheth is afterwards made king, how-

ever by this false prediction, unhappy Saul falls

straightway all along on the earth in a fit of

despair; thus is an end put to this affecting in-

terview and improbable tale.

The next account respecting our champion is,

his being still in the service of the Philistines

marching at the head of them, against his own

country, (Israel) but the heads of the people

grow jealous and they perswade Achish their

king to dismiss him, which he does accordingly,

with the same readiness as he took him into his

D

service,

1 SAM. service, after speaking in commendation of his fidelity, &c. then it says, "So David and his
xxix. "men rose up early in the morning," (and
ver 11. *what is strange,*) "to return into the land of the
"Philistines. *I should be glad to know, how that
is going away from them? Or how he could return to
a land he was never out of? But the best construction
I can put upon the meaning of the words is, that he
went to the City of Ziglag; the place Achish had
given him and his people to dwell in.*

Chap. 50. But we find before he arrived the Amalekites
had invaded it and set it on fire. *How they could
set it on fire, when they were so lately all destrayed
by Saul, cannot easily be accounted for. Nay after
that David himself, while he was in the service of the
Philistines, a third time destroys them; for it says in
chapter 27, he left them "neither man or wo-
"man alive in all their country. Sure they grew
up like asparagus or mushrooms, cut down one day
and sprang up the next. However, either true or
false, they are here alive again, setting fire to
this town of David's, (yet they shewed more mercy
then the Israelites did to them, for they spared the
lives of the women and children only taking them cap-
tive)* But David soon after by the assistance of
a treacherous Egyptian suddenly surprises them
ver. 17. in their career, "and smites them from the
"twilight, even unto the evening of the next
"day, and there escaped not a man of them, save
"400 young men, which rode upon camels
"and fled." By which means recovering all the
women, children, and goods unhurt. After-
wards they divide the spoil of their enemies
amongst them.

Chap. 51. The Philistines however bear hard upon Saul
and his sons, slaying Jonathan, Abinadab, and
Malchithua, afterwards wounding Saul himself.
Then said Saul unto his armour bearer, "Draw
"thy sword and thrust me through therewith,
"left

“ lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me 1 SAM.
 “ through and abuse me ; but his armour-bearer xxx.
 “ would not, for he was sore afraid ; therefore ver. 4 & 5
 “ Saul took a sword and fell upon it. And when
 “ his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he
 “ fell likewise upon his sword, and died with
 “ him”

Thus we find an end of this unhappy man,
 the first king that ever reigned over Israel,
 chosen and anointed by God, see chap. x. 1.
 We are told he lost God's favour by saving the
 life of Agag, *a successor of Amalek*, tho' he sa-
 crificed him after for an atonement ; unreason-
 able as this may appear, so it is related, and
 on that account, God is said to have repented
 making him King, chap. xv. 11. *I don't like*
that word, Repent. It is beneath the dignity of
God, that he should do any thing, and repent of it
after he has done, it is putting him on a level with
the weakness of man. But so it is expressed and
 from that time forward “ the spirit of the Lord
 “ departed from Saul, *meaning I suppose a good*
spirit, “ and an evil spirit from the Lord trou-
 bled him ;” so here we find both sorts of spirits
 to come from God, *which is a point not easily to be*
asserted or denied. However, in that situation he
 remained, *and no repentance could alter his fate,*
 till the day of his death, which must be about
 15 years; for we find David to be 33 years
 old, when he succeeded him, and David could
 not be above 15 or 18 by the description given
 of him, when he came into Saul's service. *I think*
it is a pity, if God was so much displeased with him,
as to repent so many years making him king, that he
did not sooner cut him off to establish his favourite.
Certainly it laid in his power so to do as well as
anoint him king. Why he did not, seeing he was
not to be moved by Saul's repentance, seems a
matter of some wonder.

2 SAM. Bnt to proceed, in 2. Sam. Chap I we find
 ii. the Amalekite or Egyptian for the country of the
 Amalekites is bordering on Egypt, that served
 David in his late success in the recovery of his
 women and effects, and who brought him the
 news of Saul's overthrow, is in recompence for
 his services, ungratefully slain also and then
 he mourns for the death of Saul 7 days.

Chap. 2. God then directs him to go to Hebron, and
 there the men of Judah anoint him King over
 them, in the 33d year of his age. But Abner
 (Saul's uncle and captain of his host) took Ish-
 bosheth (Saul's son " and he made him King over

ver. 9 " Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel,
 " and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over
 " all Israel". *I don't know how Ishbosheth should be
 alive, for we read Saul and his sons were all slain
 by the Philistines, or how Abner himself be living,
 being Saul's uncle, for 1st of Chron. x. 6, says,
 " So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his
 " house died together". If we look into the 1
 Chron. viii. 33. where there is an account of the
 stock of Saul's family, no such name as Ish-
 bosheth is there mentioned. For it says " Ner
 " begat Kish, and Kish begat Saul, and Saul
 " begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and Abina-
 " dab, and Ishbaal." In the 1 Sam. xxxi. 2.
 (where it mentions Saul's sons to be slain,) it
 only speaks of Jonathan, Abinadab, and Mal-
 chishua. But in this 2d chap. of 2. Sam. we
 find Ishbosheth particularly mentioned, being
 made King in the 40th year of his Age, and he
 reigned two years, during which time, there was
 continual war between him and David. But*

Chap. 3. Abner at last meeting with a rebuke from Ish-
 bosheth, which galled him, concerning Rizpah,
 his fathers concubine, he revolteth to David
 and came to him in Hebron, with 20 men along
 with him.

And

And David made them a feast, after which ^{2 SAM.} Abner says, "I will arise and go, and gather ^{iii.} all Israel unto my Lord the King, that they ^{ver- 21.} may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth." After which he departs from David,

to put what he promised into execution. Then we are informed Joab, David's nephew, and captain of his host, returning from battle, is displeased with David's proceedings, and wonders at his weakness to believe what Abner should say, and tells him he came to deceive; whereupon Messengers are sent after Abner who overtake him, with whom he returns to Hebron, where Joab, treacherously taking him aside in a gate-way to speak to him, smites him under the 5th rib, that he died. *It is said this was done unknown to David, but I doubt it.*

Chap. 4.

Ishbosheth and all Israel hearing of Abners death are troubled. Baanah and Rechab, two of Ishbosheth's, captains, while their king one day lay in sleep, kill him, and bring the head to David. He rewards them as he did the Amalekite who brought him the head of Saul, for he orders them to be slain likewise.

On Ishbosheth's death David is made king ^{Chap. 5.} over all Israel. *Here is a strange mistake in the life of Ishbosheth, for if David immediately succeeded him on the throne, he could not be king over Hebron, above two years before it happened, that being the length of the reign of Ishbosheth, for they both began to reign together, upon the death of Saul, one over Hebron and the other Judah, whereas several places mentions he was seven years king over Hebron, before he was over all Israel.* Soon after his being King we are informed of fetching the Ark ^{Chap. 6.} from Kirjath-jearim, in a new cart, and one Uzza only for putting forth his hand in order to keep it steady, *because I suppose he was not one of the Levitical tribe,* it is said that God smote him for his

2 SAM.

vi.

his error, and he died by the side of the ark. I look upon this as a piece of vile superstition and Idolatry, and I see no difference between people's setting an image of stone or brass up to worship it, than these Israelites to think or believe, that the God of Heaven can reside in their trunk, or ark as they call it, and be wheeled about in a cart. In short the people are not to be blamed (being ignorant) but the wicked priests ought to be punished, who invent such things to the great dishonour of God. We find they will all do it to this day, where they can; as witnesses the superstitious ceremonies of the Romish priests, especially their carrying the host of late to stop the fiery eruption of Mount Vesuvius. To read the description of the procession, and the credulity of the people, it's astonishing to think, that mankind at this time of day can be so blind and grossly ignorant, as not to see thro' their delusions. Ifancy the discovery of the craftiness of the Jesuits, will in time open the eyes of those countries, but it's not only there, but the whole world, I may say, is deceived by these avaricious Impostors. Take a view of Turkey and parts adjacent, you will find the same deceit carried on there, in the cause of Mahomet, and they are taught to believe all men are infidels, but musselmen, and will cut a christians throat because he is not of their faith. The catholic will do the same to them, and even to another christian, providing he is of another sect. If we look to India we find it different from either, the bramin there thinks he does right by prostrating himself so many times a day in the pagoda, or putting himself in some painful posture, for a length of time before some uncouth figure there decked with rich jewels, but nothing is done without an offering, and that delivered to the priest. He bestows it, he tells you, to the service of god, but the invention doubtless is for himself, to make a shew, these images on certain days are carried about on mens shoulders, as the Israelites carried their ark, or the Catholics their host. Thus you see

see they all vary in ceremony, tho' no great difference in goodness; they have each their prophets and divine revelations, and their modes of religion are framed according. As to the true knowledge of God they take but little pains to instruct them. My opinion is that if we want to see God, we must look for him, where he is to be found and universally known, not in the ark of the Israelites, or in the host of the Catholics, but in an honest and upright heart, that adores him in contemplation, and praises him for the wonders of his creation, there is no need for supernaturals to create our astonishment, the works of nature are sufficient. But to return to the history, we find after fetching the ark from this place David is very successful in waring with the Philistines, the Ammonites and others.

Here David has the kindness to take notice of Chap 9.
a son of Jonathan's, named Mephibosheth, and says, "I will surely shew thee kindness, for Jo-
" nathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee ver. 7
" all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt
" eat at my table continually." But if we look
into the 1st, of Chron. viii 34, where is the stock
of Saul and Jonathan's family, we find no men-
tion of this Mephibosheth, and that he had but
one son, and that was named Meribbaal. Whe-
ther Mephibosheth received this favour of being
reinstated in his fathers estate we know not.

The next thing of consequence is David's Chap. 11
committing adultery, with Bathsheba, the wife
of Uriah; it runs thus: "And it came to pass in
" an evening tide that David arose from his bed ver 2.
" and walked upon the roof of the kings house,
" and from the roof he saw a woman washing
" herself, and the woman was very beautiful
" to look upon, and David sent and enquired
" after the woman, and one said, is not this
" Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the Wife
" of Uriah, the Hittite?" He orders her to be
brought

2 SAM.

i.

w

ver. 8.

ver. 15

ver. 24.

brought unto him and she accordingly came, he then lies with her and we find after that she conceives, wherof she informs David of her situation, who to conceal what he had done, desires Joab to send Uriah to him and when he comes he dissembles with him, asking how Joab did? and how the people did? and how the war prospered? at last, to gain time, not knowing what to do with him, he says "go down to thy house and wash thy feet," *a mighty simple put off*. He departs from his presence accordingly, the king then sends after him a mess of meat. I suppose that is to stop his mouth, but we don't find he obeys the king's order of going home for the next verse informs us that he tarried and slept in the outer apartments of the kings house with his lords servants. *It is a wonder this disobedience did not cost him his life especially as David wanted to get rid of him.* Yet we find he did not proceed against him in that way neither could he make him go home either drunk or sober. However one morning soon after, David, (this man after God's own Heart) is detected in an action, such as even our present East India Nabobs, would scorn, for he sends this innocent man with a letter to his trusty servant Joab, the letter in the text runs thus, "Set ye Uriah in the fore-front of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die." Joab receives the letter accordingly obeys the orders, sending poor Uriah to battle where he is slain, Joab to conceal the black design of the king's, from the knowledge of the people, artfully bids the messenger that was to carry the news to the king of his death say, "and the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants, and some of the kings servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also," *This is a masterpiece of treachery and baseness as ever was committed*
and

LIFE OF KING DAVID.

25

and quite disgraceful to be acted by God's anointed. 2. SAM. xix.
After this, he makes Bathsheba his wife, and she becomes the mother of Solomon. David, we find, repents, and Nathan, from the Lord, tells him, that his sin is forgiven him. The story of the rape of Tamar, and the rebellion of Absalom, as they are no way appertaining to the conduct of David, I shall pass by. Tamar I pity, Amnon and Absalom met with the fate they deserved. Yet there are many inconsistencies in their stories.

The next relation of any consequence is the slaying of Amasa, perpetrated by Joab, tho' his Brother, in a very treacherous manner, and for a very trifling fault; but undoubtedly by David's order. Chap. 20.

Next we read, "Then there was famine in the days of David, three years, year after year, and David enquired of the Lord, what it was for; and the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." This is worthy of notice, as if God should punish David his anointed, and his favourite people, with a three years famine, for that which was committed in the days of Saul, indeed it is similar to the case of the Amalekites, in the time of Agag, for a fault committed by Amalek, ages before their time, as before observed; it does not stand to reason that God should act to us in this manner; besides it is not recorded, as I can find, that Saul did any such thing, he offended God, it is said, by being too merciful; but if this charge against him be true, the next verse shows, he did it out of zeal to serve God and the house of Israel, for doubtless, he thought it no more a sin to slay the uncircumcised, than a Catholic would one, whom he calls a Heretic. However, it says, that David sends for the Gibeonites, and speaks to them; "What shall I do for you? and wherewith
E "shal I

2. SAM. "shall I make the atonement, that ye may
 xxi. "bless the inheritance of the Lord? And the
 w "Gibeonites said unto him; Let seven men of
 ver. 3. "Saul's sons be delivered unto us, and we will
 "hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of
 ver. 7. "Saul, whom the Lord did chuse. And the
 "king said, I will give thee them. But he
 ver. 8. "spared Mephibosheth, *son of Jonathan*, because
 "of the oath between them. But the king took
 "the two sons of Rizpah, (whom she bare unto
 "Saul) which was Armoni and Mephibosheth,
 "and the five sons of Micah (the daughter of
 "Saul) which she bore to Adriel; and deliver-
 "ed them up all seven into the hands of the
 "Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the
 "hill before the Lord." How is this agree-
 "able to his oath? in swearing to Saul, "that
 "he would not cut off his seed after him."—
*By this we find David sticks to his promise in no-
 thing.*

- We now read of another giant of Gath, who
 fights with one Jonathan, son of Shimea, Da-
 vid's brother; we read in 1 Sam. xvii. of none
 of his brothers bearing that name, unless it be
 Shammah, which is a little like it. However,
 it says, "And there was yet a battle in Gath,
 ver. 20. "where was a man of great stature, that had
 "on every hand six fingers, and on every foot
 "six toes, four and twenty in number, and he
 "also was born to the giant. And when he
 ver. 21. "defied Israel, Jonathan, the son of Shimea,
 "the brother of David, slew him." Here also
 is three more giants slain. *I think David and
 his family had great success in giant-killing.* But
 among the list of David's warriors, none exceeds
 Iahhobeam the Tachmonite, chief of his cap-
 tains, for he lifted up his spear against eight
 hundred of his enemies, whom he slew at one
 time; indeed 1 Chron. xi. ix. is modest and
 makes

makes the number only three hundred; Abishai ^{2 SAM.}
(Joab's brother) also kills 300 at one time with ^{xxi.}
his spear.

Here likewise David longs to drink the water of a well at Bethlehem, which place I find is now in the hands of the Philistines, and they are there in garrison; for it says, "And David ^{Chap. 24.}
" was then in an hold, and the garrison of the ^{ver. 14.}
" Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And Da- ^{ver. 15.}
" vid longed and said, oh, that one would give
" me drink of the water of the well of Bethle-
" hem, which is by the gate." It is very strange how the Philistines came to be in possession of Bethlehem, when David had so great a victory, in the 10th verse, where it says, "And
" he arose and smote the Philistines, until his
" hand was weary, and his hand clave unto
" his sword, and the Lord wrought a great
" victory that day;" and this place so near his own city; however to please the king and show a zeal for his service, three of his mighty men break through the army of the Philistines, draw water and bring it to him; then whimsically enough, he refuses drinking, and throws it on the ground, as it is said, unto the Lord, altho' the men had risked their lives to fetch it; *this certainly is one of the most absurd of all stories.*

We are next informed of a pestilence, it says, ^{Chap 24.}
" And again the anger of the Lord was kin- ^{ver. 1.}
" dled against Israel, and he moved David a-
" gainst them to say, go, number Israel and
" Judah." What harm that was we know not, but it is there expressed to be done by God's order; tho' if we look into 1 Chron. xvi. 1. the order, we shall find, proceeds from a contrary power, for there it says "And Satan stood up
" against Israel, and provoked David to num-
" ber Israel." Which of the two David took his orders from, we know not, but we find God

2. SAM. is displeased with him for so doing, he smiting
xxiv. Israel for it with a famine. *This is a charming
description of God's goodness.*

We still find David in his usual way, sinning
ver. 10. and repenting, saying to the Lord, "I have
" sinned greatly, in that I have done, and now
" I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the ini-
" quity of thy servant, for I have done very
" foolishly." But we don't find God forgives
him, though the first account says, he moved
him to do it. God is made to be so angry with
David for this, as he will not any more speak
to him, as he used to do, face to face, but he
employs an agent, one Gad (David's seer) to
carry on the correspondence between them, and
accordingly bids him tell David, he must make
his choice of three evils, which he shall send
upon him, which are, either "seven years fa-
ver. 13. mine, or three months to be destroyed by his
" foes, or three days pestilence." David, we
find, sends word back by the seer, that he chose
three day's pestilence, sooner chusing to lay at
his mercy than man's. So it says, the Lord
sent a pestilence upon Israel, destroying 70,000
innocent people, because their king sent Joab
to number them. *Can any reasonable being think
this to be true, that God should punish the innocent,
and let the guilty escape?* for we don't find, that
David himself was afflicted. Afterwards it says,
ver. 16. "And when the angel stretched out his hand
" upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord re-
" pented him of the evil, and said to the angel
" that destroyed the people, it is enough, stay
" now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord
" was by the threshing place of Araunah, the
" Jebusite. (In 1 Chron. xxi. 15. this is called
the threshing floor of Ornan.) "And David
" spake unto the Lord, when he saw the angel
" that smote the people, and said, lo, I
" have

"have sinned, and have done wickedly, but ^{2 SAM.}
 "these sheep, what have they done? Let ^{xxiv.}
 "thine hand, I pray thee, be against me and
 "against my father's house." Then the Lord ^{ver. 17.}
 sendeth word by the seer, *for God will not yet*
speak to him, that David should set up an altar
 for burnt sacrifice on the threshing floor of A-
 raunah, and he did so; for which he gave 50
 shekels of silver, but if we look to 1 Chron.
 xxi. 25. he gave 600 shekels of gold by weight.
A vast difference in value this!

The number that Joab brings of the people
 here is, Israel 800,000, and in Judah 500,000,
 which is in all 1,300,000; but in the Chroni-
 cles, it is recorded, that the number exceeds
 the other by 27,000, for there it says, in Israel
 1,100,000, and in Judah 470,000; both added
 makes 1,570,000. *Thus you see three contradictions*
in these two accounts in the 1 Chron. xxi. and 2
Sam. xxiv.

We find after this in the first of Kings, that
 David grows old, and Adonijah his darling son
 usurpeth the crown, but by the counsel of Na-
 than, Bathsheba moveth the king to renew his
 promise in favour of his son Solomon and David
 did so, and caused Zadoc the priest, and Nathan
 the prophet to anoint and proclaim him king
 over Israel, upon which Adonijah gives up his
 point and yields.

Afterwards David begins to prepare mate-
 rials for building a temple to the Lord, on the
 threshing floor of Ornan, and giveth charge to
 his son Solomon to finish it; which, we read
 of afterwards, he compleated in a labour of 20
 years, according to a plan, we are told, laid
 down by God. *I allow the Almighty to be a great*
architect, but cannot agree with his being a modeller
of edifices. We read of nothing more concerning
 David worthy observation, but that when he
 comes

1 KINGS comes near to his latter end, he sends for his son
 xi. *~* Solomon, and, among other things, exhorteth
 him to put to death Joab and Shimei; why he
 ver. 3. gave such orders for Joab was, it is said, because
 he slew Abner and Amasa.

I think it very strange if he was displeased with Joab's actions in that respect, he did not punish him himself when he did it. But we find Joab too serviceable to him to do that, for he knew he could not do without him in most of his enterprizes, for he was his right hand, and faithfullest servant that he had. And if we examine his life all throughout we shall see whatever he did amiss, or acted with any treachery, was with no other intent but to serve his master, as for his killing his brother Amasa, if you look into the 2 Sam. xx. you will there find he committed that murder, by David's express orders, so that accusation was only pretence, to favour his own innocence, and the order he gives to his son Solomon to put him to death, is a piece of the greatest baseness and ingratitude, as was ever heard of, but it is no more than he has requited others, for their service before. As for Shimei that is an affair almost as bad for he had offended David in former times. We find when he had submitted himself, and fell down before him, when he was passing over Jordan, 2 Sam. xix. 23. "therefore the king said unto Shimei, thou shalt not die, and the king sware unto him." After that David takes him to Jerusalem with him, and there makes him an officer, in his service. 1 Chron xxvii. appoints his chief over his vineyards. Yet notwithstanding all this you see he maliciously and treacherously breaks his oath to him, and bids his son, "to bring his hoary head down to the grave with blood." After these ignominious orders we find he dies. And thus is the end of this remarkable man, after a reign of 40 years, in the 73d year of his age. Recorded to be God's anointed, and a MAN AFTER GOD'S

GOD'S OWN HEART, how far he was deserving of such a character, I shall leave any one to judge, that carefully read his history. I should be glad to know who was his biographer or biographers, in the different accounts we read of him, in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. As for the books of Samuel, *whence most of his history is taken from,*) I can prove were never wrote by the prophet Samuel, for he dies in the 25 chapter of the first book, in the days of Saul, so it is impossible, he should give an account of king David who reigned after his time, or be the author of any thing related past the 14th chapter of the first book, much more the second, besides the words mentioning, *the Lord spake unto Samuel, and Samuel spake unto the Lord,* are expressions plainly shewing it to be another persons writing, otherwise it would be, *the Lord spake unto me, and I spake unto the Lord,* likewise the same observation may be made on the 3th book said to be wrote by Moses, where it likewise says, *the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, and Moses said unto the Lord.* And the book of Deuteronomy mentions the age and death of Moses, and no man can write down an account of his own death. These remarks plainly shew these writings are only descriptions of these times, wherein those men lived, and wrote by some other person or persons and in all probability many ages afterwards, otherwise they would certainly be more correct. Dr. Hill tells us in his book of God and Nature, that Lord Bolingbrook questions whether the pentateuch was really written by Moses. And says it is not impossible these traditions were compiled after his times, and remarks that the relations in the old testament are so contrary to one another and on the whole so improbable, that they may all of them be comprehended under the name fabulous stories. And this history I
think

think pretty well proves his assertion to be true.

With what faith can a reasonable man rely on the authencity of books compiled, and preserved by Egyptian priests and Jewish scribes? a most crafty and lying race. If we look into the accounts published by Smith, in 1746, we shall there find many hundred extravagant Traditions from the Jewish Talmud, we shall be amazed; all which the Jews believe in, and put in practice, the ridiculous and superstitious ceremonies belonging to them, even to this day, it is astonishing people of their cunning should be such dupes to priestly artifice.

The scriptures is well known were lost more than once, and how they were recovered the last time, is a matter of much doubt, and certainly unknown to us, but be that as it will, I don't like many passages in them, especially where God talks to men and men to God, and in so familiar a manner as face to face, and very often on trifling occasions, and when it tells us all this, with a view I suppose to give us a fuller knowledge of God beyond what we could conceive without it, is done in such a confused manner, as it is impossible to know the meaning, and instead of making us know him better leads us into error, and imposes an imaginary being upon us, for the true God. Lord Bolingbrook says, *That we cannot believe in Moses and God, without disbelieving that God whom our reason demonstrates to exist, reason convinces him that there is a powerful and wise God, but that in the bible he does not find to be so.* I shall conclude by remarking that this history is very imperfect, the accounts confusedly jumbled together without any regular succession, and as I said before in all probability wrote by some Jewish scribe or scribes, many years after David's time. However it is, it does not reflect much credit to
David

David or honour to God. As for Solomon, his successor, and third king of God's anointed, notwithstanding the pains he took in building the temple to the Lord, and a man reckoned of great wisdom and goodness, falls from God in the latter end of his days, and worships idols.

Thus we find all these three persons of God's anointing, and with whom he was so familiar as to talk face to face, and instruct them in his will, by his own mouth, were after all no better, but rather worse than the generality of mankind. Which plainly proves it to be an imposition, I cannot credit that God had any hand in making either of them kings any more than any other monarch or king, in those times. I have no notion of thinking, because a priest puts oil upon a man's head, that God does it. Neither do I believe in the dialogues said to pass between God and them; it is below his dignity, and I think prophane in any one to assert it.

According as I see the public affected with these observations, I shall publish some other concerning the accounts given us of the Creation, the Deluge, the passage of the Israelites from Egypt to the land of Canaan, and the life of Job. wherein will be discovered, many absurdities not yet noticed, and worthy the speculation of all people, who think the belief of them a necessary article of their religion.

That the Public may judge of the author's Sentiments, the following daily and universal Prayer is offered to their Consideration.

O Father of Heaven, Creator and Governor of the universe, praised be thy name!

Endue me, O Lord, with that goodness of heart, which will enable me to act in this life with that honest sincerity, and uprightness of conduct

A P R A Y E R.

conduct, as is agreeable to thy sight. Giv me this day, I beseech thee, such a portion of thy benefits, as may be needful and necessary, and grant whatever the lot may be, I may receive and enjoy it with true gratitude and content.

Grant that those little frailties that my nature is subject to, upon proper contrition, may by thy mercy be forgiven.

Suffer me not to retain malice, but to live in brotherly love, and charity to all men; and to the utmost of my abilities, exercise a benevolence to assist my fellow creature, and in every respect behave myself, so that at the dissolution of this mortal body, I may be made a partaker of that bliss hereafter, that thou hast allotted for the just. Grant this, O heavenly Father, to whom alone belongeth all honour and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

12 JY 62





CONCLUSION.

THE Observations I have here made, as well as on divers other parts and passages of the Scriptures, that may be published in time hereafter; are with no other design, but to lay open to view such relations as are injurious to the honour and glory of God; and to try by the touchstone of reason, whether, or not, they are deserving of the credit, we and our fore-fathers have long given them. I think it is indispensibly the duty of every one to exert the faculties of his understanding in search of divine truth; and, to the utmost of our abilities, endeavour to abolish superstition and imposition, wherever they are to be met with; my capacity to such an undertaking, I am sensible is but weak, but such as it is, I believe whoever should have the perusal of these lines may meet with something which may possibly have passed by their observation, and if so they may not altogether deem the perusal lost time. For my part I am not fond of beleiving things for no other reason but because they have been credited by custom, and say to myself, I won't put myself out of my old road; or when my eyes discover I am cheated, wilfully shut them up, and say I am not. No, I think that is not acting as we ought to do. It's a laziness of spirit which we can find no excuse for. We in these parts are already wise enough to discover the absurdities and superstitious customs of the other parts of the world. and wonder at the credulity of

of mankind to follow them, but do not consider in the mean time, that they do it through the custom of their predecessors, and if we were to be born there and not exert our reason to discover falshood, we too should act in the same manner as they do. Perhaps there may be a few that may see their folly as well as we here, but care not, or dare not mention it to others, for fear of being reckoned Infidels, and abused and thought ill of by the unthinking for it. For the Mahometan or the Pagan will cast the same reflection on him that disbelieves their tenets, as the Christian does on those that differ from him, thus you see that it is reason alone that can point out truth, and if we fail in it sometimes, we have the satisfaction to think, that we have done our endeavour and more cannot be expected from us, it is necessary before we ground our faith, to examine all things; if they appear just and tending to God's glory we ought to honour and esteem them sacred. But if not, they should be thrown aside and not made articles of our faith. I hope no man will think because I speak up in the cause of reason, that I try thereby to subvert religion, no, God knows my heart, my mind is bent on the contrary, but let reason and religion join hand in hand, let no perswasion of crafty priests intice you to seperate them, let it not be said that it was chance only that you was a Christian, or because you was born in a Christian country that you are so, but remember by the same rule, was you born in Turkey, you would be a Mahometan; likewise ask reason whether you are right or no, if she tells you that you are, go on, however don't let us condemn any one that we know has a good meaning, it is my firm belief that he who serves God according to the dictates of his reason, who is just to his neighbour, and preserves as far as
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lies in his power, a virtuous life, is as acceptable to the great creator of the universe as he that has had the positive injunctions of heaven by divine revelation, and doubtless, the mercy of God is such, that he connives at the frailty of mortals, he pities the invincible ignorance of some, and the fatal necessities of others, he knows the infinite variety of our bodily constitutions and the equally different bent, of our souls, he considers the force of the elements and climates wherein he has placed us, and our different dispositions accordingly.

The whole system of human nature, with its most hidden circumstances, is exposed to his eyes that sees all things, he is no stranger to his own works, therefore he requires no more of man, than can be expected from the faculties with which he has endowed him, neither will he damn any man for any involuntary evil, much less on the account of his forefathers, which our scripture too often tells us.

This is my faith, and I believe the true religion, I acknowledge the church of England to be very fine, in most of its rites, and a great deal of good sound moral precepts is therein contained, which if the clergy were to confine their preaching to that alone, instead of intermixing it with a parcel of absurdities, and idle tales, they would be more instructive to their hearers, and men of sense and penetration would not abscond the church as they now do.

What man of sense can sit and hear the stories of Balaam and his ass, Jonas in the whale's belly, Sampson killing the Philistines with the jaw bone of an Ass, his tying the Foxes together by the tails to set corn fields on fire; where is the instruction in such tales? What matters whether they are believed or no? I think the time
might

CONCLUSION.

might be spent in God's temple, better than to hear such; if there is a necessity for them to amuse the vulgar, it must be needs thought that men of sense must despise it. However I think before it was translated into English, and suffered to be read in the church, all those blunders, contradictions, and absurdities, as I have pointed out, ought to have been rectified, and not to have been laid open to the eyes of a layman, like myself, to expose them.

12 JY 62

F I N I S.